



# STATEMENT

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by  
**Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman**  
**Regarding Canada's Announcement of BSE Investigation**  
**May 20, 2003**

"I have spoken with Canada's Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Lyle Vanclicf a short time ago about Canada's investigation and feel that all appropriate measures are being taken in what appears to be an isolated case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy. Information suggests that risk to human health and the possibility of transmission to animals in the United States is very low.

"USDA is placing Canada under its BSE restriction guidelines and will not accept any ruminants or ruminant products from Canada pending further investigation. We are dispatching a technical team to Canada to assist in the investigation and will provide more detailed information as it becomes available."

"The United States remains diligent in its BSE surveillance and prevention efforts. In 1997, the Food and Drug Administration prohibited the use of most mammalian protein in the manufacture of animal feed intended for cows and other ruminants to stop the way the disease is thought to spread.

"Since 1989, the U.S. government has taken a series of preventive actions to protect against this animal disease. This includes USDA prohibitions on the import of live ruminants, such as cattle, sheep, goats and most ruminant products from countries that have or are considered to be at risk for having BSE.

"In fiscal year 2002, USDA tested 19,990 cattle for BSE using a targeted surveillance approach designed to test the highest risk animals, including downer animals (animals that are non-ambulatory at slaughter), animals that die on the farm, older animals and animals exhibiting signs of neurological distress."

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